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"NICKELS, DIMES, AND PENNIES" OR "FOR OUR CHURCH"

by Margaret Pysarchyk

There are many things in life we take for granted. It's especially easy to "forget" to be grateful when things are going well. For example, we Orthodox Christians naturally assume that each Sunday our church will be open, a priest will be serving Divine Liturgy, and there will be sufficient funds in the treasury. Such was not always the case – just ask any "old-timer."

Over ten years ago I was asked to write the history of our parish. I was already familiar with some aspects of the parish's past. Now I heard new stories of hardships and struggles and people making great sacrifices to not only build their church but, more than once, to keep it from being sold on the auction block.

"Nickels, dimes, and pennies built our church," one parishioner told me. By today's standards, this seems an exaggeration, but in reality, this was a fact. It was the duty of collectors on the church committee to visit the homes of parishioners to collect the church dues. It was a difficult and thankless job as they walked house to house to sometimes bring only a dollar to church.

The Depression hit the parishioners of this steel town especially hard, but they thought nothing of sacrificing because it was "for our church." "The treasurer, at this time, was unemployed and didn't have money for the streetcar. He walked four miles one way so a bill wouldn't be overdue."

In December 1932, church debts totaled over $15,000 and funds were desperately needed, so a banquet was planned with adults paying 25 cents and children 10 cents for their meals. One can only imagine the despair of the parishioners who had a difficult time supporting their families and now struggled to save their church.

Due to the lack of funds, there was a great turnover of priests. Fr. Michael Kostyk commuted from Cleveland (25 miles away) just on weekends and

(Continued on Page 63, Col. 1)

I ASKED THE LORD TO BLESS YOU

I asked the Lord to bless you as I prayed for you today, to guide you and protect you as you go along your way ... His love is always with you, His promises are true, and when we give Him all our cares you know He will see us through. So when the road you're traveling on seems difficult at best, just remember I'm here praying and God will do the rest.

THE CROSS

When we enter the Church on Sunday, March 14, we will see the Cross framed by flowers on a table in the center of the Church.

Why is this? If we had attended the Vigil on the evening prior, we would have heard the canon of Easter sung! After the great hymn of glory, we would have seen the priest take the Cross from the Holy Table, raise it over his head, and carry it out of the north door of the ikonostas, and place it on a table in the middle of the Church, where the faithful stand. He was preceded by candlebearers. After censing the cross and chanting prayers and while the familiar hymn: "To Thy Cross we bow down and Thy Holy Resurrection do we glorify" is sung, everyone bows down, touching their foreheads to the ground.

But if we have missed this and are here on Sunday morning, the Cross is already on the table. What are we to do? The books tell us to do two full prostrations (kneel and put forehead to floor) then kiss the cross, then do one more full prostration. But this varies from parish to parish and depends upon the ability of the person to do full prostrations.

But, most important, what are you thinking when you go up to kiss the Cross? Will your kiss be that of an unrepentant sinner, the kiss of Judas, will it be a gesture which is respectful and superficial but changes nothing in your life, or will it be a sign of adoration, of faith, and of tenderness which makes a difference in your life?

HEAVEN IS A STAIRWAY

During a conversation with her pastor, a young parishioner expressed an idea which describes well the road a Christian – and everyone who would obey the laws of this moral universe – is called to walk. She said: "Hell is a paved road. Heaven is a stairway!"

She was not aware that she was echoing the thoughts of the Church Teacher whom we are commemorating this fourth Sunday of Lent, St. John Climacus. His title comes from the name of a book he wrote in which he describes a person's ascent to heaven as a ladder of moral and spiritual development. She was also echoing the words of our Great Teacher the Lord Jesus Himself. He said: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:13-14).

It is good to think of this when we are tempted and discouraged because of the difficulties and barriers that we find in our daily lives. They may be there to teach us useful lessons in order that we could more easily find the way that leads to true freedom for our souls, hearts and minds.

Yes, it seems that difficulties **can**, paradoxically, make things more easy for us – depending on the goals for which we are striving! Let's be courageous and determined. Sometimes the harder the road the greater the treasures to which it leads us. Let's aim for heaven! Let's keep our eyes firmly focused on the splendour of our destination – life in all its fullness.

Fr. Ihor Kutash, Ph.D.

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Mankind needs a heavenly connection, and kites bring it a little closer to the earth. You have a pull on the string and it feels like somebody's up there.

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CHRONOLOGY

MARCH 1999

DIED: Deacon Paul Miller in Edinboro, PA. Fr. Borodinoy, formerly of Philadelphia.

CARPATHIAN JOURNEY, a video travelogue, is available from Universal Productions, 151 Bayview Dr., Point Roberts, WA 98281. Phone 604-331-2505. This 60-min. video is $27.95. Other videos on Kiev, Ukraine Journey, etc. are available.

EASTER BASKET COVERS have been ordered from the Ukraine. With your purchase you are supporting a "cottage" industry. We were told that the women were eagerly awaiting our order. These covers are counted embroidery. Total cost $30. No other charges. Order from Matushka Stroyen, PO Box 9, Hunlock, PA 18621.

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II, Russian Orthodox artist, Alexandr Kornooukhov, is covering the walls and ceiling of the Redemptoris Mater Chapel with mosaics. The work envisages mosaics in the Eastern style and will remain as a gift of the College of Cardinals in memory of the 50th anniversary in 1996 of the priestly ordination of Pope Paul II. The Chapel, being restored, is halfway between the pontiff's apartment and the Sistine Chapel. Included will be mosaics of three saints common to Catholics and Orthodox.

PYSANKY are the new money raisers in some parishes. The pysanky sell well and the problem is to find enough people to prepare them.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF CAN HEAL, according to a survey conducted by Yankelovich Partners at the meeting of the America Academy of Family Physicians. Of the 269 doctors surveyed, 99% said they were convinced that religious belief can heal. "We see it all the time, and we can't deny it." What's more, 75% of the doctors believe the prayers of others can help a person's recovery.

THE 1999 SPIRITUAL LIFE AND RENEWAL CONFERENCE is open to all Orthodox from July 9 through 11 at Antiochian Village in PA.

THE FLOODING IN THE CARPATHIANS IN UKRAINE was devastating. The area affected is one of the most religiously diverse in the former Soviet Union. In western Ukraine there are 464 Orthodox parishes in the Uzhorod area with 685 in the Lvov region. There are 600 Roman Catholic parishes, most in the Lvov and Zhitomir areas. The Ukrainian Catholics parishes are centered around Lvov, Ternopol and Ivano-Frankivsk. Their membership is 2-4 million or 4% of the population. The Orthodox make up 75-80% of the total population.

A NEW CATHEDRAL IS BEING PLANNED FOR BUCHARIST, ROMANIA. It will be built in Union Square in the historic heart of the city. It will accommodate 2000 worshippers. Built on 2.5 acres, it will be 160 feet high. Cost is estimated at $5 million. Over 90 churches in the country, including 20 in Bucharist, were demolished under Ceaucescu's 25-year dictatorship.

ORTHODOX MISSION SERVICE (OMS) is helping in the production of books and pamphlets in Slovakia. It has translated several pamphlets into Slovakian. Now it has extended its outreach and published two textbooks, written at the primary school level. These are the first Orthodox school books to be printed since the communist takeover.

OVERSEAS BRATS is hosting a '99 reunion for all overseas and military "brats" from August 6-8 in Dallas, TX. It is in conjunction with Homecoming event for former students of various overseas schools. Write: Overseas Brats, PO Box 29805, San Antonio, TX 78229-0805 or call (210) 349-1394 or e-mail at osbpres@aol.com.

THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION is the educational agency of SCOBA and serves the needs of all Orthodox parishes in North America. It has received a $50,000 grant from the Farah Foundation of Wichita, KS. For info call (914) 779-9235 or write: OCEC, PO Box 174, Centuck Sta., Yonkers, NY 10710.

THE MILLENNIUM is often abbreviated as Y2K. The media is inundated with information about the computer glitz, which means that there is a possibility that chaos will prevail on January 1, 2000. Lost in all this is the fact that the Millennium has to do with the Birth of Christ 2000 years ago. Only 15 percent of people polled by Gallup knew this.

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES marks its 50th anniversary this year. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church is withdrawing from the Council; while the Polish Orthodox Church will remain as a member. The Russian Church is partially withdrawing.

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS MONASTERY in Ohio has a new superior. Fr. Seraphim (Dedes), a native of Toledo, Ohio, a graduate of Hellenic College, spent 16 years at the Monastery of St. Paul on Mt. Athos. He is an expert on the typikon (ceremonial order). It is hoped that he will help in establishing a traditional Athonite monastery guide.

THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GEORGIA, meeting in October, discussed the celebration of Easter in Finland. It follows the Western calendar even for Easter. The Synod stated that this celebration deviates from the decree of the First Council of Nicea, which the Orthodox Church follows. Since the Finnish Church is under the Ecumenical Patriarch, it is his responsibility to act on this canonical violation.

A CIRCLE OF LOVE is a prayer group in SS Peter and Paul Church in Burr Ridge, IL. They pray between 2 and 3 p.m. for the sick whose names are presented to them. For info. contact: Betty Cramp, 5340-C Crescent Lane, Oak Forest, IL. 60452-2253 or call (708) 535-1668.

USED CHRISTMAS CARDS can be sent to Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Ellwood City, PA.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING offers over 50 publications free of charge. Call 1-800-222-2225.

•"Nickels, Dimes and Pennies...

accepted whatever the committee could afford – which was $50/month and later $40/month. Besides his spiritual and educational duties, Father also helped to regulate bylaws, assessments, and the schedule of church services.

In time, funds weren't available to pay Fr. Kostyk and a priest was sought with no dependents. A number of priests came and went, but one helped to enrich the parish's spiritual life. Although his stay was brief, Fr. Prokopy Povarnitzin (Powers) taught the parish children to sing the responses at Vespers.

Even during the parish's darkest days, some people tried to make life more bearable for others. Smiles still come to the faces of people in their seventies and eighties, as they recall the humble church custodian, Kiryll Maliniak, who bought them the rare treat of ice cream during their recess breaks at Russian School.

In the early forties, with a large debt looming overhead and morale low, a compassionate, talented, and hard-working priest arrived, who guided the parish out of debt and through the war years. Fr. Andrew Glagolev, well-loved and greatly admired, brought resurgence and hope to the parish community.

In each parish, there are, no doubt, similar stories of struggles and perseverance. Men, women, and children, whose hard work and faith in God, provided us with a legacy too precious to forget and one for which we should be grateful.

ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Mareea,

Yak tam kolo vas? Toot shutko going pretty good. Nech novoho except yah neh feeluyou dobre noh barz bad. Yah neh znala che yah mala flu eelee bronck. Me staree dostal takee scared nah me condition zhe ohn call doctora ee make me appointment. Yah male takee sore throat ee mala takee fever.

Yah neh znala whether yah be making it doh doctora boh yah feeling tak weak ee me hhorachka making me sweat noh yah peeshla dostate help.

Yah neznam why they make appointments. Yah mushela sitting for two hodenu in waiting room. Tam yah kashlu ee druhee kashlyayut. Yah dumam ked yah neh hvora kolle yah peeshla doh doctora yah sure to catch shostka tam. Finally kolee yah about to give up and go to domu doh bed, ohne calluyut meme, ee bralee meney doh druhe room esche chekatee nah doctora. Kolee me getting into room yah kazuy zhe it's so cold in here, noh djivka kazke me – "not really, take all your clothes off from the waist up, and put this on." Yah dala protest. Noh ohna insisting yak ohna dala me take malee gown ot paperyah to put on. Yah started datee protest zhe it's too cold and I'm feeling bad already noh ohna started to talk to me as I was a child and ohna insisted yah put on the gown, like ohne me kazhe. Yah got taka mad zhe ohna neh sluha mene zhe yah kazhu; "No."

Ohna went out ee came back with the nurse. Ohna was even worse, ee kazhe: "Now Anna be a good girl and put the gown on." Takee very sweet voice ohna using yak doh djityene or somebody a little slow. Yah, tried last time; "It's so cold in here. Look at my goosepimples." Ohna getting mad but trying not to show it and she said: "Now put on your gown like we told you to it makes it easier for the doctor to listen to your chest."

Yah dumam, OK. If you treat me like a baby, I'll act like one. Yah made a little more fuss. Yah had a plan in mind. Yah made a little more fuss and then yah kazhuy; "OK, I feel too bad to fight. You want me to put the paper gown on, I will. Kolee ohne retreated from the room, yah nadjela gown over me blouse and sweater and sat on the examing table. I did what they asked, didn't I?

Yah znam zhe ohne povelee doctora about difficult patient boh ohn came into the room looking takee stern noh kolee he saw what I did, he turned his face so that I could not see him smiling and ohn kazhe: Glamouroutfil you got there." Yah kazhuy thanks, I followed orders.

Budte stravee,
Vasha glamorous niece, Hanya

* * * * * *

LIGHT MOMENT

A woman called her travel agent and asked: "Do airlines put your physical description on your bag so they know whose luggage belongs to whom?" The agent said: "No, why do you ask?" She replied: "Well, when I checked in with the airline, they put a tag on my luggage that said FAT, and I'm overweight, is there a connection?" After putting her on hold for a minute while "I looked into it" (Actually I was laughing), I came back and explained the city code for Fresno is FAT, and that the airline was just putting a destination tag on her luggage.

•Kitchen Corner

servings.

Variations: I sometimes make this with sauteed cabbage with onions. Use about 3 cups prepared cabbage.

Instead of the parsley, use fresh dill.

You could try other cooked vegetables.

Around this time of year, I receive many requests for a source for charnushka, which is used in Easter baking by people from the Galician area of present Poland. Since I had been given a supply and could not find it anywhere, I shared with those who needed it. Meanwhile, I searched many stores, but since I did not know what charnushka was by any other name, I smelled and poked many baggies with black, small seeds with no results. No, it is not black caraway or poppy seed, it's other name is Nigella Sativa.

One of my new friends, Mary Goomas, sent me a catalog from Penzeyes Spices, PO Box 933, Muskego, WI 53150, which has charnushka for sale. Write for a catalog or call (414) 679-7207. I understand that the company has retail stores in Norwalk, CT, St. Paul, MN, and several in Wisconsin.

PRESS FUND

Another rise in our postage makes your help vital for us to keep publishing. This has been more than the 1 cent price rise on 1st class mail. Spasebo/Thank you, we do appreciate your help and your kind words. Helping this month are: Andrew Fedetz, Rozalia Peters, Jeannette Siwy, **John Glagola,** Mary Durniak, Anonymous (2), George Andrek, **Steve Pelak,** Alexandra Bosko, Paul Laskovich, Mary Capo, Mr. & Mrs. Steve Evancho, Mary Chupak, Victor Niebuhr, Dr. Dimitrios Pappas, **Anna Dorozynski,** Mary & Lori Ortega, **Anna Glagola Wentovich,** Ethel Watlock, Dorothy Sawko, Marge Yanchisin, John and Michele Spack, Mary Reichenbach, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Vovos, Raymond Gadke, Dorothy Laskovich, Harry & Rose Kulick, Mary Kochmaruk, C. Arnold McClure, Mr. & Mrs. Cyril Wadzita, Irene Allen, Donald Belinsky, **John Chwan, Jr.,** Nida Bobich. Helen Cudlic for God's Blessings. Helen Lesko for health of Fr. and Matushka Stroyen, SR Maria Salasoo in memory of Job. Tillie Porter, Helen Buchowsky, Annabel Urban in memory of **Julia Blishak** who died Dec. 20, 1998. Marie Derkasch in memory of husband William. Julia Duffney in memory of her father John Haschytz. **Betty Vincent** in memory of friend Mary Marus who died Dec. 27, 1998. **Fr. Vitaly Voshchullo** who is sponsoring a year's Packet Plan to the parish in Albuquerque, NM in memory of his Matushka Alexandra. Juliana Kuzmack in memory of her brother Andrew Stavisky who died Dec. 31, 1998.

SYMBOL OF FAITH SERIES

March 7 – *In one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.*

O Jesus our Savior, we believe and confess, that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. You established the Church on that firm profession of faith proclaimed by the apostles, martyrs and all the saints. You commanded us in Your Word to, "go into all the world and make disciples of all nations." Send missionaries into the field to fulfill Your command, thereby, guiding all people to Your heavenly kingdom. Endow our spiritual leaders with the strength to guide our Orthodox Church in gentleness and godly fear. But most of all, may our lives be true reflections of what it means to be called a "Christian." "By this," You said, "that all will know that you are My disciples, by their love for each other." Bring unity of faith to all who profess Your Name. Hear the voice of Your Church crying to You, and have mercy.

March 14 – *I profess one baptism for the remission of sins.*

When we were buried with You on the day of our baptism, O Lord, we were united to You in a most honorable and mystic way. Through that cleansing, we were born again in the waters of regeneration that we might walk in the newness of life. Today, we recommit ourselves to you and renew those promises made for us on that day, to reject Satan, his works and all his empty promises. Strengthen us in Your holiness that with one mind, heart and mouth we may sing praises to Your Name. O Fountain of Life, listen to the prayers of Your people and have mercy.

March 21 – *I expect the resurrection of the dead.*

When You shall come to earth with glory to judge the world, O Christ our God, all the peoples who have departed from this life will be resurrected. All those who have done good shall be united with You in heaven, but those who have committed evil shall be separated from You forever. Count us worthy of the eternal kingdom prepared for those who love You, where there is neither sickness, sorrow, nor mourning, but life everlasting. O merciful Lord, do not overlook the petitions of Your servants, but have mercy on us.

March 28 – *And the life of the age to come. Amen.*

God our Father, the heavens declare the vastness of Your love; the earth is full of Your glory; every place or time is filled with You. You sent Your only-begotten Son into the world, so that, whoever believes in Him may not perish but have everlasting life. In fulfillment of the scriptures, He entered time and history in order to annul the curse of Adam that brought sin and death into the world. We have been redeemed from the curse of the law by the precious Blood of Your Son on the Cross. Help us to ascend the vertical bar of that Cross, that we might be raised with Christ. Since He gathered all people to Yourself through the horizontal bar of that very same Cross, we look forward to the day when we shall be reunited to our family and friends and the whole company of saints, where there is no sunset and all things shall be renewed. With joyful hearts, we make our supplication to You and ask You to have mercy on us.

This is the end of the 12-part series of weekly meditations prepared by Raymond Mastroberte. The series was based on the 12 Articles of Faith as defined in the Creed.

THE BABAS TAUGHT ME

As we were driving home from the Divine Liturgy, I asked Baba what she was having for lunch. She said that she had put some food in her slow cooker so that the timing was not so important. She said that she has started doing this since she couldn't predict how long the liturgy would be. She asked me if I noticed how little respect people have for the Body and Blood of Christ? They don't come for the vespers on Saturday. They look at you as if you have come from a different planet when you ask them which prayer book they use for the preparatory prayers before Holy Communion. Then they come to the Divine Liturgy at a time convenient for them – just before they receive the sacrament – then they hurry out the door. Since so many people come to communion these days, those that have communed or are in the pews don't kneel like we did or stand while the chalice is there, they take this opportunity to sit, whisper, and catch up on the news with their neighbor. You would think that people would know that they should show proper reverence to the Body of Christ. Baba is having a difficult time understanding all of this. Her question upon leaving my car was: "What has gone wrong? People of my generation didn't have any religious education – just what we learned by attending church. The people 50 and younger had the advantage of Religious or Sunday School and they act like this?"

Dabs of Thoughts

"But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away." Matt. 13:6

The Divine Liturgy grants Orthodox education and ethos to the entire pleroma of the Church. It liberates us as persons and gathers us as a liturgical community. It grants to us the future Kingdom and comforts us in the confines of tribulations upon earth. We can say that the crown of light of life and the radiance of the presence of John Chrysostom and St. Basil is the blessing of the Divine Liturgy. Through the Liturgy, we know him and he remains with us unto the ages.

Although many married women now go to church without headcoverings, they cover their heads when receiving Holy Communion.

About this time of year, some women in the parish would be busy making paper flowers. Each year the flowers were placed over and around the icons on the iconostas. Now the few parishes where icons are adorned with flowers use silk flowers and/or embroidered cloths.

In a church in Japan, we stood for the Divine Liturgy as there were no pews. However, when the sermon was about to begin near the end of the service, people went into the foyer for a folding chair. The sermon was given by a catechist. Although we could not understand much Japanese, his hand and body language were such that the sermon was one of the most powerful ones we have ever heard on Matthew 6:14-21.

Since women make up most of the choirs in the Church, why isn't there music written specifically for them?

We were wondering why in icons St. Nicholas sometimes wears a miter and on others he is bareheaded. St. Nicholas is celebrated twice a year on May 9/22 which people identify as the Spring Nicholas and in these icons, he is depicted without his bishop miter; on December 6/19, he is identified as the Winter Nicholas and he is depicted with his miter on his head.

We have selected the sunflower as the identifying symbol of our tours. They are renowned symbols of optimism and good cheer.



EDITORS' NOTES

Creeping up on us is the scheduling of school sport and graduation exercises on Sunday morning. The time for parents to complain is now before final plans are made. The sad note is that the children or young people are pressured to attend these functions. Too often, the parents go along with this. But what is more important a game or band practice or the hour spent with God and His community in prayer?

Equally disturbing are the letters we receive from many. A quote from one of them reflects what the others said. "It seems now that everything we were taught by our parents and the church, that we are now doing everything wrong. I am upset at what is going on as are so many of us older people, but we don't have the energy or health to do anything else but withdraw."

At one time we were told the tradition with little t and Tradition with big T were different. Little t's tradition could be changed but big T's Traditions could not. Now we see that traditions have been eliminated and Traditions are being attacked.

What are some of the things that bother people? The older parish members feel that they worked to establish the parish and now their keeping of the faith as they learned it is being mocked. The Divine Liturgy, which has been unchanged for thousands of years, is now being altered. The inaudible prayers are now chanted audibly. Upon checking scores of prayer books, those that include the inaudible prayers have printed instructions, inaudible or silent. Perhaps leaflets could be printed with the inaudible prayers with a note before each telling when to read it "while the tropar is sung," etc.

Other problem points are the difference in the Sacraments of Confession (Repentance) and Holy Communion; the blessing of homes; the leaving out of the litany of catechumens; and emphasis on a Sunday - minimum - financial - contributions if one is to be acknowledged as a member in good standing.

We pray especially this Great Lent that God will help us to understand the best course to take in helping to plug the holes through which the church members are leaving at a steady pace. "O Lord, who blesseth those who bless Thee, and sanctifiest those who trust in Thee; Save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Preserve the fullness of Thy Church, Sanctify those who love the beauty of Thy house; glorify them in return by Thy divine power, and forsake us not who put our hope in Thee..."

The Stregens

ALL MONTH

All of March we are in the Great Fast. This means extra prayers, meditation, fasting, charity and attendance at Church services. We are given a slight respite on the 14th, which is the Sunday of the Cross and sets midway in the Great Lent, and on March 25/April 7, which is the Holy Day of the Annunciation.

There are three Soul Saturdays during March. These fall on the 6th, 13th and 20th. If you did not give the list of your relatives and friends who have passed on to be prayed for – do so now.

The first Sunday in March, which is the 7th, is the 2nd Sunday of the Great Fast. It is dedicated to St. Gregory Palamas. The Gospel reading for the day is taken from Mark 2: 1-12. St. Gregory is an example of faith as great as that which is taught in the Parable of the Paralytic. He prayed and fasted in such a diligent way that could lead to a vision of the "uncreated light."

The following Sunday, the 14th is Cross Sunday. Mark 8:34-9:1 is read. It is the 3rd Sunday of Great Lent, the midpoint. It is given to us as an encouragement to continue on our lenten path. As the hymn reads: "And we look to Your Holy Resurrection."

St. John Climacus is remembered on the 4th Sunday of Great Lent, which falls on the 21st. St. John wrote a book in which he described the way to heaven by climbing a ladder which had rungs which symbolized various human behavior. The entrance to the caves of the Great Lavra in Kiev has a graphic ikon of the ladder and people trying to climb the rungs. This ikon is now available from ikon suppliers. People are at various levels. Some have fallen back. The influence of angels and the devil are clearly depicted.

Finally, the 5th and last Sunday before the Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday). It is dedicated to St. Mary of Egypt, who was a great sinner, who repented and changed her lifestyle. There is hope for all sinners for forgiveness from God – no matter how great the sin.

This part of the Church Calendar is beautifully structured to help us strive for Eternal Life with God.

WINTER'S GRACE

On the 4th Sunday of Great Lent – March 24 – the gospel reading is from Mark 9:17-31. The 23 and 24 verses are especially meditative. Jesus said to him: "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately, the father of the child cried out and said with tears: "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief!"

Belief, trust it all sounds so easy and seems so simple when obstacles are small and life moves at a gentle pace. Faith seems strong; it is easy to pray with gratitude and joy.

But when difficulties greater than normal occur, there is a pull and clamor which attempts to draw a person away from the rock-like trust, in which all things are possible. The mind becomes a battle zone of conflict. Doubt and unbelief press against what is seemingly a weakened faith.

The heart believes, the will forms the spoken words of faith, yet the mind trembles at the boldness. Jesus was surrounded by doubters and mockers. Unbelief was prevalent, and He, too, experienced the negative pull of the argumentative crowds. Yet He healed the possessed boy, despite the unbelief, gently reminding us that prayer in the midst of the struggle is the fine link which allows the impossible to become possible.

FUNDS

ALASKA - George Andrek

MISSION - Rita Wrobel in memory of parents John and Anna Kolesiak.

BOTH ALASKA AND MISSION - **Mr. and Mrs. Michael Vovos,** Anonymous (2), Mary and Simon Herbert in memory of Michael and Mary Spack, Mr. & Mrs. Steve Evancho, Anne Koppang, Raymond Gadke, Dorothy Laskovich, Victor Niebuhr, Vera Yurchak, Jeannette Siwy, Ethel Watlock.

* * * * * *

Why should you not believe you will exist again after this existence, seeing you exist now after nonexistence? Is it harder for God, who made your body when it was not, to make it anew when it has been?

St. Iranaeus



I read recently that cabbage is associated with Russia, beets with Ukraine, and potatoes with Byleorussia. The Belarus have many ingenious ways of fixing potatoes, often with the addition of skwarky (bacon bits). I share a vegetable-filled potato roll with you. It's a good lenten meal, add the skwarky when not fasting, and it is even better.

VEGETABLE POTATO ROLL

6 medium potatoes
2 eggs, well beaten
1/4 cup margarine or butter
2 Tbls. chopped fresh parsley
salt and pepper
1 cup cooked carrots, diced
1 cup cooked green peas
1 cup cooked mushrooms, chopped
dash nutmeg

Boil peeled potatoes in salted water until tender. Drain and mash while still warm. Add eggs, 3 Tbls. margarine or butter, parsley, salt and pepper. Mix well. Turn out on a flat surface covered with plastic and shape into a long, narrow rectangle, about 1 inch thick. Combine carrots, peas and mushrooms. Add remaining 1 Tbls. butter and season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Spoon vegetable mixture lengthwise along center of potato rectangle. Fold potato rectangle around vegetables using plastic wrap to help, if necessary. Enclose vegetables completely and form a long roll. Spread top generously with butter or margarine. Place on greased pan. Bake in preheated hot oven 450° about 10 minutes, until golden on top. To serve, cut in slices. Makes 6

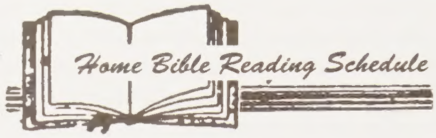
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1	Isaiah 4:2-5:7	17	Isaiah 26:21-27:9
2	Isaiah 5:7-16	18	Isaiah 28:14-22
3	Isaiah 5:16-25	19	Isaiah 29:13-23
4	Isaiah 6:1-12	20	Heb 6:9-12
5	Isaiah 7:1-15	21	Heb 6:13-20
6	Heb 3:12-16	22	Isaiah 37:33-38
7	Heb 1:10-2:3	23	Isaiah 40:18-31
8	Isaiah 8:13-9:7	24	Isaiah 41:4-14
9	Proverbs 8:32-9:11	25	Heb 2:11-18
10	Isaiah 10:12-20	26	Isaiah 45:11-17
11	Isaiah 11:10-12:2	27	Heb 9:24-28
12	Isaiah 13:2-13	28	Heb 9:11-14
13	Heb 10:32-38	29	Isaiah 48:17-49
14	Heb 4:14-5:6	30	Isaiah 49:16-11
15	Isaiah 14:24-32	31	Isaiah 58:1-12
16	Isaiah 25:1-9		

BIBLE STUDY

During Great Lent many of the daily readings are from the Old Testament. We have selected the readings from Isaiah but there are others from Genesis and Proverbs. In Isaiah 6:1-12 we read about Isaiah's vision. Saint Nicolai (Velimerovich) wrote:

"God can be known clearly through created nature, yet even more so through the inspired men of God and most clearly in the Lord Christ. The inspired men of God before the coming of the Lord Christ and about whom we read in the Old Testament were the prophets. Among the first of these was Isaiah, the son of Amoz. The spirit of God opened his sight, and he was able to see that which other men could not see. For this reason, he called his message to the people a 'vision.' It is not recorded exactly how the prophets saw the mysteries of heaven; that can only be experienced and understood by those to whom it is given by God to do so.

The visions of the holy prophets really happened, for the words and heavenly apparitions in these visions were later confirmed. They are true, and therefore influenced many men, turning them from evil to good. They are true, further, because the prophets fearlessly revealed them without regard for the suffering that they endured as a result, and even without regard for the horrible death, which many of them suffered.

What did Isaiah receive from those on earth for his visions? Riches? Honor? A high calling? He was sawn asunder by the Jews. This is riches, and honor, and a high calling – to suffer for the truth of God.

Let us listen to the prophets of God, for they are the paths that lead to the city of the great King; they are rays of the great Sun of Righteousness – Christ – Who illumines men with the light of heaven."

HIGHLY FAVORED

"The angel (Gabriel) said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you!" Luke 1:28.

Mary, who a moment before may have been musing happily about her coming marriage, felt fear when she heard the angel Gabriel. Then troubled questions filled her heart and tumbled from her lips. How? Why me?

But she did not question Gabriel's explanation. Her faith in God loomed larger than her wonder that she should be the chosen one to bring God's Son into the world. "Behold the servant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." Luke 1:38.

She was assured that her faith would end in the reality of the Messiah's birth. Luke 1:45.

We who enjoy the full rights of sons and daughters of God know that we also are highly favored. We move through a desperately sick world with the assurance that God is in control of it and of our circumstances.

But do we echo with equal submission, "I am the servant of the Lord?" when His words to us are different from what we wish to hear? Servants obey. Servants relinquish their plans in favor of the Lord's.

Obedience is a virtue far from exalted in today's narcissistic world. Yet, in Mary, we are given an example of perfect obedience appropriate to any age. Obedience to the laws of God never go out of style. God never asks the impossible. He always provides sufficient grace to accomplish His will.

The Annunciation on March 25/April 7 celebrates the announcing of Gabriel to Mary as told in the Gospel for the day: Luke 1:24-38 and her obedience to the will of God. What plans could God possibly have for us? How about: reaching out to a hurting person when we are involved in so much of our own doings? How about bearing another's burden in practical ways and in prayer (an investment of time when we are pressed with other obligations)? Or how about speaking His words which must be accompanied with perceptive love to be effective? What are His plans for you, servant, today? "Let it be to me according to Your word."